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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SPLM REPS IN NORTH DARFUR: WE DON'T BELIEVE THE CENSUS WILL
BE FAIR OR ACCURATE

REFERENCE: (A) KHARTOUM 591

(B) KHARTOUM 575
(C) KHARTOUM 584
(D) KHARTOUM 556

¶1. (SBU) Speaking at the newly-opened North Darfur SPLM office, nearly a dozen SPLM reps told poloff on April 15 that Darfurians don't support the census because it will not benefit the people of Darfur. The SPLM reps said that the SPLM will not support a census that enables the NCP to manipulate Darfur. According to the reps, the NCP will undercount Darfurians to be 5 million, instead of the 10 million that the Darfurian SPLM reps claim live in the region. (Note: The actual figure is probably closer to 5 million. End note.)

¶2. (SBU) The reps explained that two million people in the IDP camps and other Darfurians scattered throughout the world have lost their land to Arabs from Senegal, Chad, Niger and Mauritania. These foreigners will be counted as Arab Northerners, they charged, and will take over land that belongs to Darfurians. In addition, they believe that because there is no question on ethnicity on the census questionnaires, there will be no way for Southerners in Darfur to be counted as Southerners. (Note: In fact, the census questionnaire does ask whether a citizen is a "northerner" or "southerner" and also asks what region of the country he/she is from. Southerners in the North will be counted as northerners based on where they reside; however, this could be a point for negotiation between the parties since many southerners in the North are IDPs. End note.)

¶3. (SBU) SPLM representatives believe that the NCP wants the census to take place in Darfur regardless of the insecurity it may create. In addition, they claimed that because enumerators for the North have been trained in Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) offices, they have been indoctrinated by the NCP and are no longer neutral in their approach (Note: we have no evidence that this is the case. End note).

¶4. (SBU) Comment: As with the South, Darfurians are eager to claim that the size of their population is much larger than reality reflects. The fact that many Darfurians, encouraged by exile and rebel leaders, will not participate by choice, that they believe the GoS will manipulate data to undercount their region, and that they have an unrealistic perception of their own population numbers will lead many Darfurians to reject final census results if they numbers do not reflect what they would like to see. Given that the census has become so politicized, it is unlikely that any result in Darfur will be useful, other than as a statistic to be negotiated prior to the 2009 elections.

FERNANDEZ